

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1813

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to a statewide effort to establish and meet graduation and reengagement goals.

Brief Description: Regarding establishing and meeting graduation and reengagement goals.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt, Probst, Priest, Sullivan, Liias, Quall, Carlyle, Kelley, Santos and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/6/09, 2/13/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes graduation and re-engagement goals for the year 2020.
- Directs the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish annual targets for schools and school districts in order to meet the goals.
- Requires the SBE, in consultation with others, to make recommendations to the Legislature on a focused assistance program and incentives for school districts to improve graduation rates.
- Replaces the Building Bridges work group with the Building Bridges Advisory Committee and specifies the entities from which membership is drawn.
- Expands the duties of the Building Bridges Advisory Committee beyond those held by the work group.
- Requires entities with appointed representatives on the Building Bridges Advisory Committee to, within existing resources, assist with meeting the graduation and reengagement goals.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Dammeier, Hunt, Johnson, Liias, Maxwell, Orwall, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195)

Background:

Pursuant to its authority to establish accountability measures, the State Board of Education (SBE) has, by rule, established school and school district goals addressing high school graduation rates. Under the SBE's rule, each high school must reach a graduation rate goal of 70 percent in 2009. This rate must increase by 3 percentage point increments per year through 2013, reaching an 85 percent rate by 2014.

In 2007 the Legislature directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to create a grant program, known as the Building Bridges Program, to begin the phase-in of a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval system. A state-level work group was tasked with assisting and enhancing the work of the grantees. In December 2008 the work group recommended to the Legislature that the state should set statutory goals and targets for: (1) the percentage of students that will graduate from high school; and (2) the percentage of youth who have dropped out but will re-engage in education.

Pursuant to new federal regulations, a state must set a single graduation rate goal that all high schools must meet annual graduation rate targets that reflect continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting or exceeding the graduation rate goal. Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, schools and the state must meet or exceed either the graduation rate goal or the state's targets for continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Graduation and Re-engagement Goals.

The following graduation and re-engagement goals are set:

- By 2020, 95 percent of students must graduate from high school in four years.
- By 2020, 60 percent of youth who have dropped out of school must be reengaged in education and be college and work ready.

State Board of Education.

The SBE is charged with establishing annual graduation rate targets for schools and school districts in order to meet the graduation goals by 2020. These targets must reflect continuous and substantial improvement from prior years and ensure that adequate progress is made by low-income and minority students. The SBE is also directed to establish annual targets for re-engaging youth who have dropped out.

In consultation with the OSPI and the Building Bridges Advisory Committee, the SBE is required to make recommendations to the Legislature on a focused assistance program and incentives for school districts to improve graduation rates. These recommendations are due by December 1, 2009

Building Bridges Advisory Committee.

The Building Bridges work group is replaced with a Building Bridges Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). The Advisory Committee will have a representative appointed by the director of each of the following entities: the OSPI, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Employment Security Department, the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Family Policy Council, and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment. The Advisory Committee shall also have one representative from the following:

- skill centers;
- juvenile courts;
- Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys;
- Washington State Office of Public Defense;
- educational service districts;
- area workforce development councils;
- parent and educator associations;
- local school districts;
- agencies or organizations that provide services to special education students;
- community organizations serving youth;
- federally recognized tribes and urban tribal centers;
- each of the major political caucuses of the Senate and the House of Representatives;
- and
- minority Commissions.

The Advisory Committee's duties are expanded beyond the duties held by the work group. New duties include making recommendations regarding flexible funding, common program eligibility criteria, common objectives and strategies, alignment of resources, common assessment criteria, and connections between education and social service programs at the local level.

Entities with representation on the Advisory Committee must, within existing resources, develop program objectives and measures to meet the dropout goals and explore opportunities for collaborative action to reduce the dropout problem. The WTECB is charged with advising the Advisory Committee regarding the best ways to re-engage youth who have dropped out.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A representative from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment is added to the Advisory Committee. A single remaining reference to "work group" is changed to "Advisory Committee."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The school drop-out issue needs to be addressed and a coordinated approach is necessary. This is a step in the direction of consolidating and coordinating efforts. This is a priority for the Superintendent of Public Instruction. There are enormous fiscal costs associated with dropping out, fiscal costs to the individuals as well as society as a whole. Setting goals in statute with respect to drop-out prevention and re-engagement is important and necessary. The focus should be on providing assistance to prevent drop-outs and re-engage those who have already left rather than on punishment. Many who drop out are in special education and this aspect of the drop-out problem should receive attention. Among juvenile inmates, 83 percent are drop-outs. One survey found that 80 percent of respondents knew someone who had dropped out. Efforts must be made to get youth who have dropped out back into school.

(Opposed) There is concern that with mandated targets, schools with drop-out reengagement programs may be penalized. It has been observed that some very good alternative high schools have already been closed because of poor adequate yearly progress marks under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Hunt, prime sponsor; Tom Lopp, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; and Jena Graham, Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

(Oppose) Lile Holland, Washington Association for Learning Alternatives.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.